

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 HA-05 TRSE-00 SSM-03 AF-10 ARA-10
EA-10 EUR-12 CA-01 EB-08 OMB-01 /138 W
-----011507 281238Z /17

R 271617Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7296
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1653

STATE ALSO PASS AID

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UNRWA LE
SUBJ: STATUS OF UNRWA NEEDS

REF: STATE 074585

1. RE PARA 3 REFTTEL, AID REP ADVISED MINISTER RIZK ON MARCH 24 THAT U.S. EXPECTED DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF COMMODITIES ON AS EQUITABLE BASIS AS POSSIBLE TO ALL WHO HAVE BEEN DISPLACED FROM SOUTH, INCLUDING PALESTINIANS. IN THIS CONTEXT, U.S. WOULD EXPECT ASSISTANCE TO GO TO PALESTINIANS OUTSIDE UNRWA CAMPS, WHILE UNRWA WOULD ASSIST THOSE IN CAMPS.

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2. RIZK REPLIED THAT GOL POLICY WAS TO ASSIST ONLY LEBANESE. PLO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PALESTINIANS AND HAD ISSUED ITS OWN APPEALS TO VARIOUS NATIONS. FURTHER-MORE, UNRWA WAS CHARGED WITH PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED PALESTINIANS. RIZK CLAIMED THAT "PALESTINIANS HAD ALREADY OR HAD ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT

FOOD TO MAKE DISTRIBUTIONS." (FYI AN UNCONFIRMED RUMOR GOES THAT PLANELOAD OF ALGERIAN COMMODITIES ARRIVED MARCH 21 BEIRUT, DESTINED ONE-HALF FOR LEBANESE, ONE-HALF FOR PALESTINIANS, WAS COMANDEERED BY ADF AND TURNED OVER IN TOTAL TO PALESTINIANS. GOL HAS REPORTEDLY REGISTERED COMPLAINT. END FYI.)

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON MARCH 25, UNRWA COMMISSIONER GENERAL MCELHINEY STRESSED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL APPEAL THAT THE GOL MADE ON MARCH 22 WAS FOR 200,000 REFUGEES, INCLUDING ABOUT 70,000 PALESTINIANS (SEE BEIRUT 1546). IN MCELHINEY'S VIEW, THE GOL THEREFORE HAD AN OBLIGATION TO USE SOME OF THE AID IT RECEIVED FROM U.S. AND OTHER SOURCES ON THE BASIS OF THIS APPEAL FOR PALESTINIANS. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE GOL WOULD NOT GIVE ANY OF THE AID IT RECEIVED TO PALESTINIANS.

3. MCELHINEY ADDED THAT SOME ARAB COUNTRIES WERE GIVING AID DIRECTLY TO THE PALESTINIANS, AND THAT THE GOL WAS NOT BLOCKING SUCH AID. THERE WOULD BE NO "IMMEDIATE NEED" FOR EMERGENCY AID FOR "TWO OR THREE DAYS," BUT THERE MIGHT BE AFTERWARDS. UNRWA EXPECTED EXTRAORDINARY AID ACTIVITY WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS.

4. MCELHINEY, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM SIDON, ALSO
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REMARKED THERE WERE MANY ARMED FEDAYEEN IN EIN EL HILWEH REFUGEE CAMP. HE ADDED THAT "SUBSTANTIAL" NUMBERS OF LEBANESE HAD STARTED TO LEAVE SIDON TO RETURN TO HOMES FURTHER SOUTH. (MCELHINEY WAS UNABLE TO SPECIFY THE NUMBER, BUT SAID IT WAS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN "HUNDREDS" AND "THOUSANDS.") IN ADDITION, A "HANDFUL" OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES HAD LEFT SIDON FOR CAMPS IN THE TYRE AREA. MOST OF THE 10,000 PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, WHOM THE PLO HAD ORIGINALLY MOVED FROM DAMOUR TO BAL AN NAIMAH, HAD NOW COME TO BEIRUT, MCELHINEY NOTED (SEE BEIRUT 1545).
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Disposition Reason:
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